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SUBJECT: FRANCE WILL ATTEND VIENNA CONFERENCE ON NAHR
AL-BARID, BUT REPRESENTATION AND (UNLIKELY) FINANCIAL
CONTRIBUTION UNDECIDED

REF: STATE 60216

11. (U) Embassy passed reftel message on the Vienna conference on Nahr al-Barid to the French MFA's equivalent to the NEA bureau as well as to the staff of French Cooperation Ministeron Alain Joyandet June 9. The French MFA had already publicly saluted the Austrian initiative in a June 5 statement, indicating that it would attend without specifying who would do so or the anticipated size of the French contribution.

12. (SBU) During bilateral consultations on NEA issues, French MFA NEA DAS-equivalent for the Levant Ludovic Pouille confirmed to visiting NEA A/S Welch June 12 that France would attend but not at the ministerial level. Pouille said it would be difficult for France to offer a pledge given its significant obligations to the Lebanese government under Paris III. France also viewed the situation facing Palestinian refugees affected by the fighting at Nahr al-Barid and elsewhere in Lebanon primarily in terms of its humanitarian and not its political aspects. Pouille added that the GOF wanted the GOL to use the Vienna conference to state clearly how it intended to proceed on this issue.

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